that the first principle and original of all things should be that, which is most perfect (as Aristotle* observes of Pherecydes, and his followers, TO y*vv»?<rav ir^Jtw aptorov Tt0la<jf, that they made the first cause and principle of generation to be the best), and then apprehending, that to be endued with conscious life and understanding is a much greater perfection than to be devoid of both, (as Balbus in Cicero declares upon this BeHat. very occasi on, " Nee dubium quin qupd ctp.[T]xvii.*p. animanssit, habeatque raentem, etratio-nem, st sensurn* id sit rnelius quam id qtiod his careat") they therefore con-clude, that the only unmade thing, which was the principle, cause, and original of all other things, was not senseless matter, but a perfect conscious understanding nature, or mind. And these are they, who are strictly and properly called The-isls, who affirm, that a perfectly conscious understanding being, or mind, existing of itself from eternity, was the cause of all other things; and they, oa the contrary, who derive all things from senseless matter, as the first original, and deny that there is any conscious understanding being self-existent or unmade, are those that are properly called Atheists. Wherefore, the true and genuine idea of God in general, is this, A perfect conscious understanding being (or mind) existing .of itself from eternity, and the cause of all other things.

T. But it is here observable, that those Atheists, who deny a God, according to this true and genuine notion of him, which we have declared, do often abuse the word, calling senseless matter

* Metaphjsicor. lib, xIL cap. iv. p. 446, torn, iv* **oper.**